

A New Host by PamelaS.C

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Summary: Things are getting progressively worse for Will since he returned from the Upside Down. Johnathon and the guys go to drastic measures to help him.

A New Host

"Guys, something's wrong with Will," Johnathon said, respectfully peeking his head into the fort. Will hadn't been in there in months, but there were his friends, Mike, Lucas, and Dustin.

"We were just talking about that. It's obvious," Dustin spat out.

"Well, yeah, of course. But, actually, I'm surprised you guys are hanging out here. This was the last place I checked."

"That's exactly why we're hanging out here. We've gotta come up with a strategy and fast," Lucas stated.

"It's like this, Johnathon. We're his best friends, and we know something has to be done. I think we are the only ones who have the nerve to do it. Well, maybe with your help?" Mike stuck out his hand to shake with Johnathon.

"Of course. Tell me what you think. And please tell me it's not to take him to some doctor or psychiatrist. It's not like we can talk about what really happened."

"Yeah," Dustin chuckled. "That would get us all locked up and dressed in hospital gowns!" He looked at Mike, and stopped, realizing that's exactly what El wore the first time they met her.

"I'm sorry," he said to Mike. "Bad joke."

"No, it's alright." Mike took a deep breath. "So, am I right in thinking Will doesn't talk at home, either? Because he sure doesn't talk to us. He'll walk home with us sometimes, just looking down at the ground. Sometimes I can get him to smile, but he won't talk."

"Yeah, you're right, Mike. He doesn't talk at all. Sometimes he just stares into space, and every now and then he'll shudder or jump, like something just crept up behind him. Only, nothing's there. At night, he screams in his sleep at least 2 or three times. The teacher called my mom yesterday. Said she needed to take him to a psychologist. He sent Will to the school guidance counselor. Guess that didn't work.

So, yeah, something's gotta be done."

"We can't trust men in lab coats," Mike said. "Darn it, I wish El was here. Okay, so the guys and I were talking about this. We need to enlist the help of some undesirables, you know, people that some consider, charlatans."

"Okay. To be honest, Mike, I've seen it all. I'll even be willing to believe that something like that might work. You know there's a psychic in the next town over. We could take him there."

"Now you're talking," Lucas said.

"So, you would drive us then?"

"Of course." Johnathon nodded.

"We have to do it on a school day, so Mom won't be looking for us. They never call about absences until later in the day. It'll buy us some time. Are you okay with driving a bunch of truants into the next town?"

"You bet. Even better if it's a school day, because Mom will be at work, too busy to wonder what we're up to."

"We'll meet Will somewhere on the way to school. We can't let anyone see us leave the school grounds."

"So, the psychic I'm thinking of, used to have a commercial on t.v. Sunny Lewis was her name," Johnathon said.

"We're way ahead of you, buddy. Here's the address. She's free to see us next Tuesday," Lucas replied.

"Okay, sounds like a plan." Johnathon looked down at the address, impressed.

"Maybe she can tell us what's going on inside him, and how to fix it," Dustin added.

#

The day had arrived. Joyce Byers dropped Will off at school like she had been doing every day since he was found. His pals were in the parking lot, and they all stopped to talk. She backed out and drove off, glad he had such good friends. What she didn't see, was Johnathon parked by the dumpster, slouching in his seat until she left. He started the car and drove up, parking next to the guys. One by one, they stealthily entered the car, sitting down low. Johnathon then drove away from the parking lot.

It was an hour drive to Evansville, Indiana. Johnathon really hoped the visit wouldn't take too long. He also realized he might have to buy the guys lunch. Luckily, he'd brought a little extra money. There had to be a McDonald's there somewhere.

Her home stuck out like a sore thumb. There was an artistically painted sun that said "Sunny Lewis, Your Helpful Psychic" with birds and flowers on it. Streamers hung from her trees. The driveway was colorfully painted as well, and her house was purple with light blue trim. Interesting.

"No. no. I can't do this. He has something. Inside him. You have to take him to an exorcist..."

"Exorcist?"

"Where do we go?" Johnathon was ready for any unsavory character if they could help his brother.

The woman moved to a table, never taking her eyes off of Will, and picked up a card that she handed to Johnathon. "Call him."

"Is he an exorcist?" The card was for a spiritual healer.

"He will tell you where to go."

"Well, can I use your phone?"

"No. You must go, now," she whispered, shakily.

They boys exchanged looks.

Johnathon asked, "Alright then, thank you. How much do I owe

you?"

"Ten dollars." She stood still, staring at Will.

"Okay. Here's a five, and, another one," he dug in his pockets for change.

"It's okay. Six is good. Just go. And God bless you." She looked at him sincerely.

Tears streamed down Will's eyes as they descended her steps. "You okay?" Johnathon asked.

Will nodded yes, and held his belly.

"Are you hungry?"

Will shook his head side to side.

Johnathon got them all in the car and drove down the road to a gas station, where he called the man on the card, Rupert Hendree. It was decided, they could go straight to see him. He was twenty minutes away. Johnathon decided to go through the McDonald's drive-through on the way.

Soon, wrappers and McDonald's bags were lining the floor. Everyone enjoyed lunch except for Will, who was staring straight ahead.

"We're gonna get you some help, Will. No doctors."

Will just looked down.

I have to try not to speed, Johnathon thought. It was sure he'd be in trouble if stopped by a cop.

When they got to the address, Johnathon saw that it was a church. Not a Catholic church, though, but one of those modern types that was housed in a simple building.

Mr. Hendree let them in. "Come now. Follow me."

He wore a priest's color and robe. He sure looked like he belonged in

a Catholic church.

The man led them to a door on the side of the church, where they entered and went down a hall to another room. This one was very ornate, with crosses, candles, and something that looked like an altar.

"You're an, an exorcist?" Johnathon asked.

"Yes. That's basically what you'd call it. Here, sit down. How can I help you?" The man eyed Will.

"My brother, this is Will. He was um, kidnapped." He fumbled for words. "He was taken to, a place under..."

"Underground," Dustin interjected.

Johnathon continued. "By an evil..."

"Man," Mike spoke.

"I see. You know I heard of your brother's disappearance. They proclaimed him dead. Do you think his abductor performed any, um, rituals with him?"

"I'm almost certain of it, sir. He has barely been speaking for months. He is, despondent. He doesn't enjoy anything anymore. And at night, he screams like he's in pain, but he won't tell us why. Something has to be done. It's getting worse."

"How can you be certain he doesn't need a psychologist?"

"Mom already tried that. It didn't work." Johnathon lied. The truth was, there was no way his mom would trust anyone with "Doctor" in their name. Not after what the Energy Company did.

Mr. Hendree lit a candle.

"Are you a priest?"

"I used to be. But I am always an exorcist. I have what some call, the gift."

As Johnathon wondered why the man was no longer a priest, Mr. Hendree dipped his hand into a bowl of water, said a few Hail Marys, and began speaking Latin. He made the sign of a cross on Will's head, and Will started shivering dramatically, then he coughed, violently.

"Evil, be gone!" Mr. Hendree stood up and held the cross up to Will's forehead, his hand firmly on Will's shoulder.

As he coughed even more violently, Will held his stomach. Green vomit started coming from his mouth. Mr. Hendree got down on a chair level with him.

"The spirit is leaving you! The evil is leaving you, Will Byers! Evil be gone!"

Will's eyes seemed to pop out of his head as he coughed even more violently and a big, slimy lump spewed out of his mouth, right into Mr. Hendree's mouth, seeming to pin him to the wall on the other end of the room. It appeared to have legs that were dangling out of Mr. Hendree's mouth! He was struggling to pull it out while mumbling unintelligibly. Suddenly, it seemed to slime its way into his mouth and down his throat. His eyes bulged and face red, Mr. Hendree held his stomach.

Thinking the lump with legs might dig a way out of Mr. Hendree's stomach, Johnathon grabbed Will and rounded up the guys.

"That wasn't just vomit," Dustin screamed.

"It was a baby demagorgon! I know it was!" Lucas own eyes were bulging with fear.

"Mr. Hendree? Do you need anything?" Johnathon asked, keeping his distance.

The man just mumbled in a low growl.

"We need to get Will out of here," Mike said, reading Johnathon's thoughts.

Except Johnathon couldn't help but feel responsible for what was happening to this man. He didn't struggle with his conscience for too

long though; those boys were his priority. He did, however, leave a twenty dollar bill on the table by the door.

He grabbed Will again, and the boys all followed him out to the car, where he hastily fumbled for the keys and started the engine. Swiftly, he pulled the car out of the lot and raced toward the next gas station to get out.

"Operator." He spoke into the payphone. "There's an emergency at All Saints Holy Center on Bayview South. I think the reverend is having a heart attack."

The operator asked, "Your name?"

Johnathon hung up the phone and jumped back into the car, hoping the cops could save the man and kill the little monster as he sped off to the highway, boys in back, fast food wrappers on the floor, and one Will Byers smiling as he munched on someone's leftover fries.